

SAUDI ARABIA | IN FOCUS

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE INFORMATION OFFICE OF
THE ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA IN WASHINGTON, DC

JUNE 7, 2011

FOREIGN RELATIONS

White House reiterates strength of Saudi-U.S. relationship

The White House said on June 1 that the United States' relationship with Saudi Arabia remains strong, and that the two countries remain in constant communication. White House Press Secretary Jay Carney made this statement while answering a question from the media about the status of U.S.-Saudi relations following an announcement that Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John Brennan is travelling this week to a number of countries in the Middle East. "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an important partner to the United States, and U.S. officials remain in constant contact with the Kingdom on a variety of levels," Carney said. "This visit is just part of that continued contact and partnership."

Yemeni President arrives in Saudi Arabia for medical treatment

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh arrived in Saudi Arabia on the evening of June 4 to receive medical treatment after being injured in an attack the previous day. According to a statement released by the Royal Court, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz sent a specialized medical team to Yemen to conduct a medical examination of President Saleh and other injured in the attack. The medical team recommended that the president would need advanced medical treatment in the Kingdom. President Saleh agreed, and his travel to Saudi Arabia was facilitated, along with several other Yemeni officials who had been injured in the attack. The royal statement added, "As the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wishes a speedy recovery for the president and all the injured, it is distressed by violent incidents in the Republic of Yemen which have resulted in deaths and injuries. It calls upon all parties to exercise restraint and reason to spare the Republic of Yemen the risks of sliding into more violence and fighting [and prays] to Allah Almighty to preserve Yemen and its people and to bestow security and stability upon them."

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ENERGY

Saudi solar energy production to soar

Fossil fuels, led by petroleum and gas, will continue to meet most of the world's energy needs for at least the next few decades, Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Ali Al-Naimi said during a recent speech at Poland's Gornicz-

Hutnicza University of Science and Technology. However, new sources of energy will need to be added over time in order to maintain the strength of the world economy. In the wake of the emerging middle classes in Asia and the rapid population increase in developing countries, the sustainable provision of greater energy supplies has become a vitally important issue, Al-Naimi explained. Reaching this goal will require the use of petroleum to meet the majority of the world's energy needs, while also allowing for the development of other sources.

For its part, the Kingdom is constantly working on maintaining stable flows of energy to the world. Saudi Arabia's proven reserves of 264 billion barrels of oil are just a part of the equation, Al-Naimi said, noting that the Kingdom has invested \$125 billion over five years along the petroleum value chain. Saudi Aramco continues to focus on supply sustainability and is using technology to find and exploit new reserves. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has expanded its focus to other forms of energy, including solar. In this regard, King Abdullah University for Science and Technology (KAUST) is playing a pioneering role in solar and other renewable energy technology. Al-Naimi disclosed that KAUST and Saudi Aramco are cooperating in the creation of low-cost solar energy solutions for industrial activities, including cooling, water desalination, pumping and other processes. He added that Saudi Aramco is planning to build the Kingdom's biggest solar energy plant, which would produce 10 megawatts of light electro energy. Saudi Arabia plans to produce solar electricity in levels tantamount its oil production, Al-Naimi declared.

EMBASSY ACTIVITY

D.C. students put on performance at Saudi Embassy

A group of students from Aiton School in Northeast Washington, D.C., visited the Embassy of Saudi Arabia on June 2, in a culmination of this year's Embassy Adoption program. Sponsored by the Washington Performing Arts Society and D.C. Public Schools, the program matches each participating embassy with a school. Embassy personnel visit their "adopted" students during the school year, teaching them about the country they represent. At the conclusion of that period, the students visit their embassy and put on performances showcasing what they have learned. Saudi Arabia is a charter member of the Embassy Adoption Program. For their presentation, Aiton School students recited poems to Embassy staff in the auditorium. The children had the opportunity to dress up in traditional garb and enjoy a lunch of Saudi cuisine.

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COUNTERTERRORISM

Saudi Border Guards kill wanted terrorist in gun battle

The Ministry of Interior announced on June 7 that two Border Guards were killed and another injured during a gun battle with an infiltrator along the Yemeni border in the Najran province. The Ministry of Interior identified the infiltrator as Abdullah bin Abdulrahman bin Saleh Al-Sayel, a Saudi national. Al-Sayel was wanted for terrorism, including the May 26 attacks on security officers in Buraidah in the Qassim province that resulted in the death of one officer and the wounding of another. The Ministry of Interior said Al-Sayel was arrested February 17, 2004 and convicted for involvement in terrorist activities, including the preparation of an Al-Qaeda training camp, providing weapons to recruits and assisting them with foreign travel and participating in attacks against security forces and violating the conditions of his release not to travel to troubled countries. After serving his sentence, Al-Sayel was released and sent to a rehabilitation program.

SAUDI ARABIA-U.S. RELATIONS

President of Saudi Human Rights Commission receives U.S. official

President of the Saudi Human Rights Commission Dr. Bandar bin Mohammad Al-Aiban received visiting U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Tamara Wittes in Riyadh on June 13. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral cooperation, particularly in the field of human rights. Dr. Al-Aiban briefed Wittes on Saudi efforts and mechanisms to disseminate the culture of human rights, highlighting the training, workshops and programs offered by the Commission to all segments of society. Furthermore, he pointed to the efforts of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz to protect human rights, as well as his initiatives aimed at achieving peace in the Middle East and promoting interfaith and cross-cultural dialogue.

FOREIGN AID

Jordanian Minister thanks Saudi Arabia for economic support

Jordanian Minister of Planning Jaafar Hassan expressed his thanks to and appreciation of the government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz for supporting Jordan's economy. In a statement issued in

Amman on June 6 following his recent visit to Saudi Arabia, he noted that the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) financed 18 projects worth \$315.5 million in Jordan during the period from 1975-2010.

58 injured in Yemen evacuated to Saudi hospitals

Upon the instructions of King Abdullah, 58 people injured in Yemen during clashes between government and opposition forces have been evacuated to Saudi Arabia for treatment. It was reported in Riyadh on June 9 that the injured, accompanied by about 30 companions, were rushed to several medical facilities, including Riyadh Armed Forces Hospital, King Abdulaziz Medical City for the National Guard, King Faisal Specialist Hospital, Jeddah King Fahd Armed Forces Hospital, Taif Armed Forces Hospital and Taif Prince Mansour Military Hospital.

Saudi Arabia supports Niger's broadcasting station

Saudi Ambassador to Niger Ibrahim bin Ali Abdulhaq delivered broadcast equipment worth SR 2 million [\$533,000] on June 9 as a gift from the government of Saudi Arabia to Niger's broadcasting station during a ceremony in Niamey.

IIROSA relief supplies benefited 29,233 disaster victims last year

The International Islamic Relief Organization of Saudi Arabia (IIROSA) distributed two million kilograms [4.41 million lbs] of relief materials to drought victims in 22 Asian and African countries last year, benefiting nearly 30,000 people. According to IIROSA Secretary-General Dr. Adnan Basha, the organization took the initiative to provide assistance to disaster victims, particularly orphans, widows and displaced persons.